EXHIBIT 4
DATE 2-11-15
HB 373

2015 Legislative Session—HB 373

HB 373 permits a school district to use 100% of taxable value for setting school bonds rather than the current 50% and will provides many districts, like Sidney with opportunity to work with facility needs and in the end, it is still voter driven. Language does not change the State's responsibility and has no fiscal impact to the state. Why is this bill important?

Consideration # 1: Current Bonding Capacity is restrictive.

1. Present bonding capacity for Sidney based on demographic study may cover 1/3 the cost of a new school.

District Bonding Capacity

District	Taxable Valuation	@50%	Current Indebtedness	Available Bonding Capacity
Elementary	$ 15,799,526.00	$ 7,899,763.00	$ -	**$ 7,899,763.00**
High School	$ 25,406,299.00	$ 12,703,149.50	$ -	**$ 12,703,149.50**

Sidney's enrollment forecast provided by McKibben Demographics and a capacity study developed by CTA projects a future high enrollment to take place between 2023-24 for K-5 (704 Learners), 2023-24 for 6-8 (542 learners) & 2023-24 for 9-12 (601 Learners) and a districtwide high of 1,726 students in 2023-24. Present facilities will not withstand these numbers and a new school is a potential reality. Projected cost for a new middle at $190/sqft, 77,400 SF is $19,921,870.00. **I believe sqft cost is low with the cost of new schools in Williston and Watford City at over $300/sqft. Even with full bonding capacity, the District is short and has to build up reserves.**

Note: In the last five years in response to an increasing student enrollment, Trustees in Sidney have completely reopened one school that now serves grades K, 4 and 5, nearly 350 students.

Consideration # 2: Facility Expansion

Increasing enrollment has pushed many schools in many cases to capacity. Bonding capacity limits set in code, school site acquisition code, and other code limitations restrict Trustees in their response to serve both a growing student enrollment and staff. MCA code combined with construction and remodeling costs set schools up to be reactive versus proactive in addressing local needs. Fiscal flexibility, revision to bonding capacity and processes that allow impact schools to accelerate responses to needed infrastructure is paramount.

Consideration # 3: Academic Impacts

Increasing enrollment has demographically changed the instructional and academic needs for students new to many of our Montana schools in energy development regions. A higher percentage of students are in need of remediation services (Title I, RTI interventions) or special education. These stressors consume "regular classroom space" and result in the need for additional facility expansion/building.

True academic responsiveness at the local level is inclusive of all of the considerations noted as they equate to delivery of a Quality Education for students in Oil and Gas Impact Schools.